

TERRITORIAL DISPUTES AND THE COLLECTIVE RESIGNIFICATION OF THE HABITAT. NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE COMMON FROM THE CASE OF PARQUE ESPERANZA, CORDOBA (ARGENTINA)

Disputas territoriais e resignificação coletiva do habitat Notas sobre a produção do comum do caso do Parque Esperanza, Córdoba (Argentina)

Territorial disputes and the collective resignification of the habitat. Notes on the production of the common from the case of Parque Esperanza, Cordoba (Argentina)

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The eviction of Barrio Parque Esperanza.
Source: Facebook of Jóvenes al Frente

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ABSTRACT

Cities today are going through a process that deepens socio-territorial inequalities based on the advance of the spatial materialization of financial capitals and the appropriation of urban territories as a profitability strategy. However, diverse social groups dispute the spaces that this capital captures through collective strategies of resistance and by raising awareness, highlighting the dimension of "the common", giving the exercise of the collective, the collaborative and/or community-based senses. This article aims at analyzing and interpreting the resistance of the residents who have socially produced their territories from the common in the face of expulsion strategies derived from speculative real estate processes, within the framework of the particularities assumed by this dispossession process in the metropolitan region of Córdoba (Argentina). In particular, we present the analysis of the Barrio Parque Esperanza case, which when faced with a process of judicial eviction from its neighborhood in 2018, has stood its ground for 14 months in a process of collective resistance and negotiation with the provincial state towards making the right to land and housing effective. The epistemological approach recovers the idea of the dialogue of knowledge proposed by the southern and decolonial epistemologies, since it seeks to recover the experiences from the perspective of the players in their own territories, looking to contribute with knowledge to demonstrate a specific social reality situation characterized by processes of fragility and, at the same time, with potential to boost the production of the habitat from the common.

Keywords: Territory, social inequality, social conflict, habitat, social organization

RESUMEN

Las ciudades actuales se caracterizan por atravesar un proceso de profundización de las desigualdades socio-territoriales en función del avance de la materialización espacial de los capitales financieros y la apropiación de los territorios urbanos como estrategia de rentabilidad. Sin embargo, colectivos sociales diversos disputan los espacios que el capital captura mediante estrategias colectivas de resistencia y visibilización de sus problemáticas, poniendo en relevancia la dimensión de "lo común", dado el ejercicio sentidos de base colectiva, colaborativa o comunitaria. Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar e interpretar las resistencias de los pobladores que han producido socialmente sus territorios desde lo común frente a las estrategias de expulsión derivadas de procesos especulativos de la tierra y negocio inmobiliario, en el marco de las particularidades que asume este proceso de desposesión en la región metropolitana de Córdoba (Argentina). Particularmente, presentamos un análisis sobre el caso de Barrio Parque Esperanza, que frente a un proceso de desalojo judicial de su territorio barrial en el año 2018, ha resistido durante 14 meses en un proceso de resistencia colectiva y negociación con el estado provincial hacia la efectivización del derecho a la tierra y vivienda. El acercamiento epistemológico recupera la idea del diálogo de saberes propuesto por las epistemologías del sur y decoloniales, pues interesa recuperar las experiencias desde la perspectiva de los actores en sus propios territorios, en busca de aportar conocimientos para evidenciar una situación específica de la realidad social caracterizada por procesos de fragilidad y a la vez, potencialidad para abonar a la producción del hábitat desde lo común.

Palabras Clave: Territorio, desigualdades sociales, conflicto social, hábitat, organización social

RESUMO

As cidades de hoje são caracterizadas por atravessar um processo de aprofundamento das desigualdades sócio-territoriais em função do avanço da materialização espacial do capital financeiro e da apropriação de territórios urbanos como estratégia de rentabilidade. Entretanto, diversos grupos sociais disputam os espaços que o capital captura por meio de estratégias coletivas de resistência e visibilidade de suas problemáticas, destacando a dimensão do "comum", dado o exercício de sentidos coletivos, colaborativos e / ou comunitários. O objetivo deste artigo é analisar e interpretar a resistência dos moradores que produziram socialmente seus territórios a partir do comum diante de estratégias de expulsão derivadas de processos especulativos de negócios imobiliários, no quadro das particularidades que assume este processo desapropriação na região metropolitana de Córdoba (Argentina). Em particular, apresentamos uma análise sobre o caso do Barrio Parque Esperanza, que frente a um processo de despejo judicial em 2018, resistiu por 14 meses em um processo de resistência coletiva e negociação com o governo regional em direção à efetivação do direito à terra e moradia. A abordagem epistemológica resgata a ideia do diálogo de saberes proposto pelas epistemologias do Sul e descoloniais, pois interessa recuperar as experiências da perspectiva dos atores em seus próprios territórios, em busca de fornecer conhecimento para evidenciar uma situação específica da realidade social caracterizada por processos de fragilidade e, ao mesmo tempo, potencialidade para fertilizar a produção do habitat a partir do comum.

Palavras Chave: Território, desigualdade social, conflito social, habitat, organização social

INTRODUCTION

Cities have been characterized since their founding on being spaces that have gone through power-based conflicts, as these are geographical and social concentrations resulting from a socially defined surplus, appropriated by a minority group in detriment of the majority (Harvey, 1977; Signorelli, 1999). Far from lessening this asymmetric condition around urban built-up areas, in recent decades conflicts about the access, use and appropriation of the city have become more evident since the "property boom". In this regard, Harvey (2019) claims that the great flows of capital are invested in the housing market and infrastructure projects, which has resulted in "accumulation by dispossession" processes, generating many conflicts related to the capture of valuable land, occupied for years by low-income populations which, in most cases, ends with their expulsion towards sectors with greater vulnerability.

Within this context of unequal dispute for the appropriation of urban space, Rolnik (2018) states that the accumulation strategies of the 21st century are related with the financial view that the economy and politics have taken on, whose spatial materialization is confirmed through the production of "landscapes for rent", starting from the configuration of novel resignification processes of urban territories from a logic of urban extractivism (Svampa & Viale, 2014, Vásquez Duplat, 2017). This logic generates frictions and disputes with "landscapes for life", firstly as a real estate business and secondly, as a place for the reproduction of daily life.

The new "landscapes for rent" in Latin American cities are installed in specific sectors of these, identified as residential and consumption spaces for the elite and middle-classes (for example, shopping centers, "design" services and stores, enclosed high-rise units, gated communities, etc.) which often break down the historic or socio-cultural fabrics, appropriated and recognized by their inhabitants, becoming new boundaries, regarding the "landscapes for life", many of which are built from the logic of survival, from material needs and desires for prosperity, produced with limited resources and on the available land (outskirts, environmental risk areas, etc.) (Rolnik, 2018). Clearly, this dispute and conflict for the appropriation of land is unequal, and it is not just expressed as material and symbolic boundaries, but rather through the expulsion strategies of the inhabitants, classified as informal or illegal, starting from the economic, political and judicial mechanisms that facilitate it.

These accumulation processes, through the dispossession or expulsion of working-class sectors in the region's cities, have been addressed in the field of urban studies from different approaches. Some have focused on the territorial transformation and gentrification processes of certain areas of the city (through the renewal of the historic center, revitalization of certain slums, new large urban projects, etc.) and the consequences these had for their inhabitants, being driven away from the area as a result of property development pressure and the increase in the costs of the residence (Janoschka, 2016; Salinas, 2017, Vásquez Duplat 2017, 2018). Another line of analysis refers to how in this context of the deepening and polarization of inequalities, diverse social groups fight over the spaces that capital captures, through collective strategies making their problems and resistance visible (Casgrain & Janoschka, 2013; Pérez & Matus, 2017, Elorza & Morillo, 2017, among others). It is especially interesting to look at the work of Gutiérrez, Aguilar, Navarro Trujillo & Linsalata (2016), dedicated to the study of "Community networks and the shapes of politics", where they give credit to the category of "production of the common", starting from the study of other possible means of organization and reproduction of social life, that are more satisfactory regarding the forms of existence imposed by the modern capi-

talist world, in the experiences of autonomy of indigenous, working-class and peripheral urban communities.

The emergence of "the common" is then set out, as a productive analytical category to explore the processes of capital capture over the means of production and reproduction of life in the context of a political economy of global financialization, specifically in the social production processes of the habitat of working-class sectors who live on the fringes of large cities.

Not unconnected to this city production process, strategic sectors of the Cordoba Metropolitan Region (Argentina), crystallize this articulation around the dispute for the appropriation of the territories in a rent/life key. Spaces on the outskirts that, up until two decades ago, had no or limited urbanistic value, reason why they became accessible to working-class sectors (through lotting, social housing neighborhoods and land appropriation strategies), that begin to be resignified and disputed by property development companies to produce new urban developments for high-income sectors (gated communities, towers, office and shopping center complexes, etc.).

Alongside the absence of habitational public policies aimed at the working-class sectors, in recent years a series of conflicts have arisen around collective appropriation processes of the land and the social production of the habitat (Elorza & Morillo, 2017), judicially resolved with eviction orders of the different communities¹. It is worth highlighting that these processes saw different fighting and resistance strategies used by the inhabitants and social organizations in defense of their lands.

Considering all this, the idea is to analyze and interpret the resistance of the inhabitants who have socially produced their territories from "the common" facing the expulsion strategies, derived from land and property development speculation processes, in the framework of the particular aspects that this dispossession process assumes in the Cordoba Metropolitan Region (Argentina). In particular, we present an analysis of the case of the Parque Esperanza Neighborhood² which, on facing an eviction process from their neighborhood in 2018, characterized by a violent procedure, has resisted for 14 months in a cause of collective resistance and negotiation with the Provincial State towards the fulfillment of the right to land and housing.

This is an interpretative work developed using a qualitative type methodological strategy. The epistemological approach recovers the idea of the dialog of knowledge proposed by the southern and decolonial epistemologies, as it is interesting to recover experiences from the perspective of players in their own territories, seeking in this way to gather knowledge that is useful not just to demonstrate a specific situation of social reality, but also to support its transformation with useful tools for the affected communities.

The empirical approach is a case analysis, the community of the Parque Esperanza Neighborhood, as this experience of the habitat's social production allows recognizing the tensions in the logics in city production, making inequalities in land appropriation control strategies visible, along with the activity and capacity of working-class sectors towards building life reproduction processes.

The methodology strategy used comprised, on one hand, the analysis of secondary sources (academic works, news reports) for an approach to the production process of this land before the eviction. On the other hand, we made a survey and mapping of the organization and use of the chapel space, as a place of residence in the post-eviction process, and semi-structured interviews with the adults of the families who came together

METHODOLOGY

1 For example, in the Comechingones communities in Cuesta Blanca, Villa La Maternidad, Nuestro Hogar III, among others.

2 The analysis and reflections of this article are recorded in the extension project "After eviction: socio-organizational strategies towards the fulfillment and land and housing rights", under the direction of Susan Andrada and co-direction of Cecilia Marengo, with the participation of professors and researchers from the Faculty of Social Sciences (Elorza Ana Laura & Cuella Silvina) and the Institute of Housing and Habitat Research (Mattioli, Denise; Brunelli, Alejandro & Alvarado, Monica), from the Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism and Design, of the National University of Cordoba.

to get land and housing rights³. This universe is made up of 9 families who live in the chapel and another 15 who have developed other habitational strategies awaiting an effective response from the Provincial Government of Cordoba.

We start from the assumption that the social production experiences of the habitat from the senses and practices of the territory as a "common", represent the activity capacity to dispute the means for the production and reproduction of life in suitable material conditions, as guarantees for the provision of a worthwhile life, facing the capture the state-capital makes of the lands in times of economic and political financialization. For this purpose, we return to the ideas of "production of the common" (Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2016, 2017), "struggles for the common or making common" (Navarro Trujillo, 2015) aiming at dismantling the dual, binary and hierarchical concept that capitalist and patriarchal modernity assigns to the spheres of daily life, with the social production processes of the working-class habitat being the boundaries that avoid the total capture of the cities by finance. In this sense, the interviews looked to retrieve the senses around the construction of the habitat from the common, to nourish this aspect of analysis from the specific experience of the case.

RESULTS

The origin of the Parque Esperanza community started around 2014, when what was unused land was taken over by families that came from different neighborhoods of the city of Cordoba, land that was next to the Ciudad de los Niños social housing development, located in the municipality of Juárez Celman in Cordoba's Metropolitan Area. At this time, most of these families were renting housing or rooms, shared homes with other households, or were women escaping gender violence situations who did not have a home where they could live with their children. As such, taking over this land meant the possibility of having their own lot to build not just a housing solution but a way to escape situations of violence.

The habitat's social production process was rich in terms of the collective construction of a place to live with a family and community-base, on a "vacant lot" without utilities. The habitational units were self-built with wood and nylon and a few with concrete. Collectively, a community space was built where different actions took place to promote a space for meeting, organization and solidarity (glass of milk, community lunches, and festivals) and a housing cooperative was set up (called "12 de Junio"), as a strategy to formalize and consolidate the organization, looking to prepare a housing project.

It is worth mentioning that the work done experienced disputes regarding land appropriation, as one sector of the occupied land belongs to a construction company, Urbanor S.A., which had projected building a gated-community there. Another sector belongs to the Provincial Government of Cordoba. This conflict was taken to court, representing ongoing pressure of eviction. In addition, the inhabitants reported that over the four years of living on the land, they endured sustained threats and repressive actions, for example, people from outside the neighborhood threw stones at their houses and one was even burned down, or that they had police controls all day long.

After several years of frustrated negotiations, facing the demand of land expropriation by the inhabitants and the social organization, on June 1st 2018, the community (148 families) was evicted in a police operation, in a very violent procedure that violated human rights. The constructions were razed by bulldozers and only some families could collect their belongings (furniture, clothing, documentation, etc.).

As a response to the vulnerability of these families, the Provincial Government proposed an individualistic approach, with a meagre subsidy so that

3 The interviews were made in the period between April and October 2019.

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they could solve their housing situation. Some families accepted, even though acknowledging the proposal's limitations. Others, a group of around 44 families, as a resistance strategy to face the subjugation of human rights, occupied a chapel building located in an adjoining neighborhood, Parque Norte, that same afternoon. This action stemmed from the difficulties of using any habitational strategy under the terms set out by the Government, but also as a way of collectively continuing with the negotiations for a definitive housing response that would include all the families, from a community perspective.

In August 2019, an agreement was signed with the Provincial Government to award 33 lots in the San Javier neighborhood, on a site that was not yet urbanized (no utilities, streets or subdivision of lots), so their possession would take place in a period of one year. To continue with the resistance, some families decided to continue living in the chapel.

As we mentioned, the site of the chapel is located next to the site they had taken over and were evicted from. Initially, 44 families decided to resist there. However, despite efforts to keep the entire community united in the fight, as time went by, the number of families in the chapel dwindled. This was associated to the difficulties that the living space imposed for handling basic needs; also, to the loss of hope regarding a response about the hand-over of the lots by the Government, as no concrete progress about their awarding could be seen. It is worth highlighting that the daily production and reproduction of these families got even harder, within the country's economic crisis and also with the suspension of the food donations that they received, which represented an important contribution to ensure daily meals.

Some families developed different habitational strategies, like sharing houses with other households (many of them also located in working-class settlements or sectors, they rented rooms, or wooden huts, etc.) where they managed to get a place to live, even though without escaping habitational precariousness (situations of overcrowding and deficient sanitary conditions), tensions and conflicts stemming from the length of time in a reduced space.

A group of 9 families (29 people in total) continued to live in the chapel and put into practice different organization strategies for the space, to be able to inhabit it. Although it is in a good condition and has basic utilities, the function it was created for (religious ceremonies) is not compatible with living, even less so for a significant number of people who had to adapt, not just to the reduced and atypical conditions of the space, but to sharing daily life, seeing their privacy and family dynamics affected. In this sense, the strategy built up consisted in establishing differentiated spaces for each home, dividing the indoor area of the chapel for five families and the remaining four located in the surrounding free space, in units/huts.

Inside the chapel, the subdivisions were made with 2 m high wooden panels, leaving minimal habitational units with surface areas of between 15 and 20 m² approximately. This inevitably led to situations of critical overcrowding, lack of suitable ventilation and sunlight. Likewise, it must be mentioned that these reduced spaces are used not just to rest (sleep), but also to cook, eat, bathe, etc.

The habitational modules organized inside were made using the dry process, with wooden side panels and sheet metal or wooden roofs, covered with tarpaulin and nylon as a barrier for insulation. In other words, none of these units have effective thermal insulation and secure conditions for climatic events (heavy rain, hail, wind). On the other hand, regarding the



Figure 1 and 2
Space of the chapel inhabited by the families.
Source: Denise Mattioli (2019).

surfaces of these modules, they are formed by a single space of approximately 20 m², which is another reason why overcrowding is seen.

From this condition, it is seen that the habitational characteristics both of those who live inside the chapel and those living outside are extremely precarious [Figure 1 and 2]. By surveying the characteristics of the building, it has been confirmed that the premises do not have thermal or acoustic conditioning that meets habitational requirements (for example, the lack of insulation in the sheet metal roofs generates situations of intense heat or cold, representing risks for the health of those living there). The electrical system inside the chapel is deficient and insufficient for such a demand, which creates another unsafe situation, with a fire recorded on the electrical panel due to the overload of the original installation, caused by the increased consumption.

In addition, the building has just one bathroom, where the sewage system quickly collapsed, rendering it useless. Added to this, the water available for human consumption, according to testimonies of those interviewed, is dirty due to the lack of tank maintenance. The Provincial Government, in response to the demands related to the critical sanitary situation of these families, installed eight chemical toilets on the site, which are shared by all the people. It is worth mentioning that the drainage of these toilets is done weekly, generating situations of risk due to hygiene conditions (transmission of diseases), which is aggravated in spring or summer by the high temperatures. These are toilets so they do not have showers. As a result, this aspect is resolved in a very precarious manner by each home, through the redistribution of the water provided using hoses or containers (pots and buckets).

Aside from the habitational modules, an orchard and a meeting area to hold collective activities were set up in the vacant spaces, while a sector of the chapel is used exclusively to store food, medicine and the furniture they have been able to recover from the eviction or from donations received. There is a square on one side of the chapel, which is used by the families as a community meeting spot. The activities of the organization are held in this space (like assemblies, community lunches), as are those with other institutional players like, for example, photography workshops, the orchard, brick production, etc.

The families, regarding living in the chapel, describe the precarious living conditions they have experienced there: *"The chapel, although it is a temporary living space makes daily life difficult. The toilets are in a bad way, there is overcrowding, noise, we feel the heat or the cold, but even so, I prefer being there because things don't solve by themselves". "... it is very difficult being here with the kids, it gets so cold, so hot, we're tired of it..."*. As

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those interviewed mention, keeping up the fight for land in this resistance around the chapel, lets them not just be accompanied and contained in moments of weakness, tiredness or uncertainty about the future, thus overcoming the difficulties they go through, and that they have been subjected to ever since the day of the eviction.

A year on from the eviction, they organized a press conference to publicly report the serious socio-habitational situation of the evicted families and the non-compliance of the agreement made with the Provincial Government regarding the awarding of lots, but it was also a space to acknowledge the learnings built up in the habitat's production process over those 4 years, regarding the strength of collective work, the abilities of the organization and how they created bonds through a sense of belonging and solidarity.

Starting from interviews held with the families that continue the resistance process and activism for the rights to land and housing, notions and senses about the experience of the common in the habitat's social production are recovered. From a material aspect, the self-produced land (neighborhood and housing) was characterized by the precarious conditions for the reproduction of life (wooden huts, connections to deficient utilities, etc.). However, the recognition of the effort invested and the sense of "one's own" configure the subjectivities regarding their neighborhood, which was taken from them through the eviction, just as some of them express: *"we heard about this neighborhood from friends and we came here because we need to have a concrete place to live that is ours..."; "we had a room made of concrete and a kitchen, dining room and a bathroom made of pallets and compressed cardboard. They demolished it and we got out the clothing, odds and ends, the beds... We lost everything. We had hope of staying there"; "when I went to see the neighborhood, I fell in love, it was very quiet, I could build a room and install a kiosk, it was my source of work and income, with the eviction I lost it all..."*

Recovering the collective aspect of the habitat's production process, from a comprehensive notion of the land not just as a place of residence, over a year after having suffered the eviction and the loss of their place to live, a strong attachment is seen towards the experience of the community they have had, *"we had community days on Saturdays where we shared lunches, chatted and thought about how to improve the neighborhood, we built a community room between us"; "we went through very hard moments together, when they said they were going to evict us and we organized actions so that the entire society knew about our fight"*.

These assessments show bonds of mutual trust, support and help that make social reciprocity and collective support possible, even under adversity. We consider that these senses are those which the persistence of the current organizational structure are built upon, generating spaces for the production of the common as the space to gather for meetings and assemblies, the community orchard and in the current resistance to achieve the rights to land and housing.

In this sense, expectations regarding the resolution of this conflict that the group of families express, revolve around the recognition of a dignified treatment as subjects of rights and of the joint demands for land and housing, that make the reconstruction of the Parque Esperanza community in a new place, possible. And in this direction, they develop a series of actions to set this in motion, like the ecological brick manufacturing project run by a group of women to build the new community center and the work done with the different public bodies.

DISCUSSION

In tune with the context of globalization, the control of the city's production by global finance and the growing participation of the figure of the financier in property developments reinforces the binary and hierarchical conception. Landscapes for rent and landscapes for life, which Rolnik (2018) speaks about, emerge as results of a fragmented and asymmetric handling of social reality. Following the southern and decolonial epistemologies, this fragmentation goes back to the ontology of modern rationality, which crystalized over 500 years, the coloniality of power, of knowledge and of being (Quijano, 2000; Lander, 2000; Santos, 2009; Maldonado Torres, 2007) from the setting up of the colonial regime with the Laws of the Indies and that gets updated currently in the urban-territorial planning with the division of roles, the large urbanistic projects and infrastructure works, fragmenting the territory and its communities.

In this framework, the dual conception of the cities (center/outskirts; private/public; closed/open; city/countryside; etc.) responds to a particular design of the modern world that legitimizes capitalist and patriarchal order, placing the individual and capital before the collective and common (common natural goods like natural resources, public spaces and institutions). In this sense, the distinction that Rolnik (2018) makes about the consolidation of landscapes for rent in detriment of landscapes for life, may be understood under this logic of separation: the first associated to the formal city (of white elites, of colonizers and American-born people who joined forces with the elites) and the second with the informal city (of working-class sectors, self-produced on the outskirts), in a clear asymmetric power relationship, as the first element of the binomial is the one with the power of enunciation and the latter is subsidiary or subordinate to the rulings of the former⁴.

Rolnik (2018) gives the landscapes for life a trait of transitoriness, as these are latent spaces to be captured by the landscapes for rent towards the expansion of the financial capital and clarifies "there they evict, displace and we see the megaprojects, widespread mega evictions of all kinds of ties and ownership of land that is not individual registered property" (p. 244).

The commercialization of nature throughout history consolidated the dis-possession of the means for the production and reproduction of life; in the contemporary extractivism processes, the colonial principles of appropriation of lands are also updated, in terms of the supremacy of private property

4 Sousa Santos (2016) recovers the dual and fragmented perspective of social reality when reflecting about contemporary cities, cities where two cities coexist, the metropolitan (where the right to the city is guaranteed) and the colonial (those condemned members of the city, i.e. the city of the excluded). There is an "abysmal line" between both which is not physical but symbolic, and that is represented by the forms of modern domination: capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy, which operate in a joint and articulated manner.

Figure 3

Exterior of the chapel in the Parque Norte Neighborhood of the city of Juárez Celman. Source: Denise Mattioli (2019)



facing possession, as an essential element for the reproduction of life of working-class sectors. Thus, the absence of title deeds of working-class sector lands is key in the dispute for their control and appropriation, and the evictions recorded on the outskirts of the city reinforce the extractivist nature of the production processes and the accumulation of real estate capital in sectors that previously were not under dispute.

The emergence of socio-spatial (in)justice in cities, which for a long time was assumed, naturalized, and experienced in a hierarchical, fragmented, and sexist manner; today is debated around the paradigm of common and communal. This is because, in most cases, the social relations that produce the common tend to emerge from the concrete cooperative work of self-organized human collectives that weave articulated collaboration strategies to face common problems and needs and to, thus, guarantee the reproduction and care of the material sustenance (Gutiérrez Aguilar; Navarro Trujillo & Linsalata, 2016).

The social movements in the urban space account for the disputes for land, housing and the city – its streets, neighborhoods, public spaces, monuments and institutions – questioning the collective imaginary to rethink means of access, uses, appropriation and enjoyment of these. Facing this issue, feminist urbanism (Muxi, Casanovas, Ciocoletto, Fonseca and Gutiérrez, 2011; Perales, 2014) demands recovering the city as a space for cohabitation, the relationality facing a city that is not neutral, but a space of tension, where well-defined powers are under dispute, reproducing the asymmetries of gender, class, race, educational level, cultural level, etc.

We could infer that the production of the common also generates a kind of “attachment”, as we mentioned above, with the idea of “one’s own”. This form of “attachment”, Rolnik (2018) says, is essential in terms of claiming presence, rights and disputes of senses and resources by the working-class sectors, who allege “the permanent conflict in the city, in the dispute for urban land and the city for life, compared to the urban land and the city for capital, for profits” (p. 249).

For the case we are analyzing, the resignification of the presence is materialized not just by recreating the community in another physical space – the chapel –, but also, graphically with banners, signs and regular protests in the center of the city to keep the conflict from losing public resonance and from diluting without resolutions from the State [Figure 3, 4 and 5].

Figure 4
Wooden huts located on the available land around the chapel land.
Source: Denise Mattioli (2019)



Figure 5

Reappropriation of the common space of the chapel. Source: Denise Mattioli (2019).



Continuing on this line, Navarro Trujillo (2015) uses the idea of fragility to describe diverse collective experiences in urban contexts, which have been emerging in recent times to resist the capitalist plunder and to recreate a social self-determining community to guarantee the reproduction of life. The political aspect, in this sense, is a relevant factor in the working-class socio-organizational processes and it is driven by what is considered as common – access to land – and in common – collectively. Thus, a very important component in the political aspect of these experiences, as a capacity to give form to sociality, is the production of collective decision and determination, which includes the starting up and experimentation of organizational forms, methods, procedures and ways where making the common is organized, where deliberation takes place and where a resolution is made.

The history of the Parque Esperanza neighborhood and its production from collective processes represent ways and means of building the habitat from the common, where senses and strategies dialog to sustain practices towards the reproduction of life in material, symbolic and political terms. A process characterized by the fragility before the asymmetries of power, but whose reconfiguration was possible post-eviction, through the strategy of inhabiting the chapel, as a means of collective resistance until achieving the resolution of the conflict. This means that constructing the common was organized to satisfy a need that is both individual and collective, in other words, shared by the organized social collective.

The collective resolution of temporarily living in the chapel meant the resistance to completely dissolving the community organization. We must remember that the subsidy device contributed to social conflict and collaborated towards breaking up the collective organization. The binary logic of the state-capital acted by weakening social cohesion, taking advantage of the vulnerability on facing extreme shortage situations, putting against each other, within the organizations, their capacity to form and act. The chapel as a material and symbolic landmark, acquired a central role in the conflict, since it not only worked as a site for contention to overcome daily life, but that over time, was resignified to work as a space for assembly, education and training, of visibility, and for other purposes. The classic role of a chapel, which is to be sporadically used to bring the congregation together, is put in a crossfire for the disputes for the city and transformed into a home, a neighborhood and a trench, resignifying this space and opening up to new significations given by a particular context. This landscape, albeit austere and, of course, atypical, allowed sustaining the material basis for the production and reproduction of life for the families, on facing abandonment by the State.

CONCLUSIONS

The city, as we have seen throughout this work, is intimately dependent on the rulings of the capital, and that at the same time reproduces a hierarchical, dual, fragmented and excluding structure, disputed by diverse social sectors, who recover forms of common production. We have analyzed this process using the terms of Rolnik (2018) as spaces in dispute between landscapes for rent and landscapes for life, from the case of the collective organization of the Parque Esperanza Neighborhood community in the origins of their setup and after the violent eviction that led to the temporary relocation in the chapel.

The experience of struggle and resistance of this community saw multiple tensions, both on the plane of disputes and power relationships, revealing the fragility of these experiences. But the production of the habitat from the common also allows contributing to the analyses about the social production of the habitat, the capacity of the working class of urban territories to form and act as collective strategies for the reproduction of life in material, symbolic and political terms, constituting the access to the right to land in a vindicative process, from which demands for land and housing are collective. This collective drive is what ensures the reconstruction of the entire Parque Esperanza community at a new site.

In epistemological terms, the debate agenda that these social vindications show is the possibility to make socio-spatial readings that retrace the binary and dual paths that have been instituted as pillars of social reality in favor of contemplating the diversity of the ways of being, producing and signifying territories and spaces; matters related to the idea of the common. From this aspect of the production of the common, following Rolnik (2018), the idea of the right to the city, argued back in the '60s, allows rethinking it again when facing the events that are experienced in the 21st century cities as a "floating platform" of the articulation of both social and state-capital movements, where the asymmetries of power are crystalized, as the social movements proclaim their use as a space for life and the state-capital as a space of control and profit. The incompatibility of these spheres puts under the limelight the politic dimension of the cities as territories of conflict that are always moving and rearticulating, resignifying them.

Addressing the problems of the working-class habitat, incorporating critical theoretical frameworks like those that the southern and decolonial epistemologies provide, collaborate to reflect about the asymmetries in the key historical aspect of colonial domination, as they offer horizons to rethink the social reality from the perspective of the common, all of which translates into contributions for the decolonialization and de-patriarchalization of the hegemonic knowledge about cities.

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